

Patrice Lumumba, a True African Hero

T.G. Mukengechay comments on the documentary "Murder Colonial-Style," by Thomas Fieffer, shown on Nov. 1, 2000 on German TV.

The Congolese politician Patrice Lumumba, Prime Minister of the first government of Congo, was brutally murdered on Jan. 17, 1961 in Katanga province, along with his companions Mpolo and Okito. After 40 years, this crime can no longer be prosecuted, and the murderers, their controllers, and the men behind it, today speak proudly and openly about their alleged murder.

First, a short summary of the film: At the beginning there is a macabre picture of a man named Gerard Soete, then the police chief in the disloyal province of Katanga, who is trying with difficulty to open a carefully tied-up package. This package contains two teeth torn out of the mouth of Patrice Lumumba. The man unceremoniously explains that these are the only remains of the corpse of the Prime Minister.

Further on, the film shows the people chiefly responsible for the murder: Jacques Brassine, a top Belgian bureaucrat and diplomat; Louis Marlière, a colonel of the colonial army in the Congo; and Larry Devlin, the CIA chief in the Congo. It shows Jean von Lierde, as a rare exception among whites, a Belgian anti-militarist, the only European with a PR post in Lumumba's government, who has strong sympathy for his former boss even today.

Then you see Col. J. Mobutu, Finance Minister of Katanga J.B. Kibwe, and N. Nendaka, the chief of the security services in the Congo.

The film shows Lumumba's first speech in 1959, just about a year before the independence of the country. In it the Prime Minister-to-be makes it clear that he wants to work with the Belgians after independence. Thus there obviously exists, from the beginning, a clear vision of a change toward harmonious cooperation among all people in an independent Congo.

Then comes the day of independence on June 30, 1960. During the official ceremony of the transfer of power, Belgian King Baudouin speaks first, emphasizing the benefits given the people by the "civilizing mission" in the Congo in general, and by the founder of this colony, his great-grandfather Leopold, in particular. He doesn't mention the crimes—brutality against the civilian population in every form, up to and including genocide—which were committed by the Belgians and the aforementioned King Leopold, and which earlier evoked worldwide protests. This historical truth appears not to have disturbed King Baudouin, and he dared, even on the day of

independence for the Congolese people, to repeat the perpetual lie about colonialism's "civilizing mission."

As the second speaker we see Mr. J. Kasavubu, the first President of the Congolese Republic. He maintains a friendly demeanor toward his Belgian guests, and prays above all to the loving God for help.

It is still a matter of controversy as to whether Prime Minister Lumumba's speech was provided for in the protocol, although apparently it was not. Perhaps Lumumba should also have praised the benefits of colonization in the administration of his old "masters"; on the other side, many participants spoke of a surprising and unexpected speech by the appointed Prime Minister. Apparently Lumumba, in the face of the lying by the old master, got hot under the collar.

The reality, in any case, is that on this day, the previous balance of Belgian colonialism over the Congo was broken, because the people in the Congo were never willing subjects of the colonizers. And they could not, therefore, when the domination of the Belgians had finally come to an end, pretend that everything had gone along well during the whole colonial period.

If everyone was concerned about establishing the future on a new and sustainable basis, then the slate should have been wiped clean. That and only that was what Lumumba had in mind. But that's exactly what was still forbidden for "the nigger."

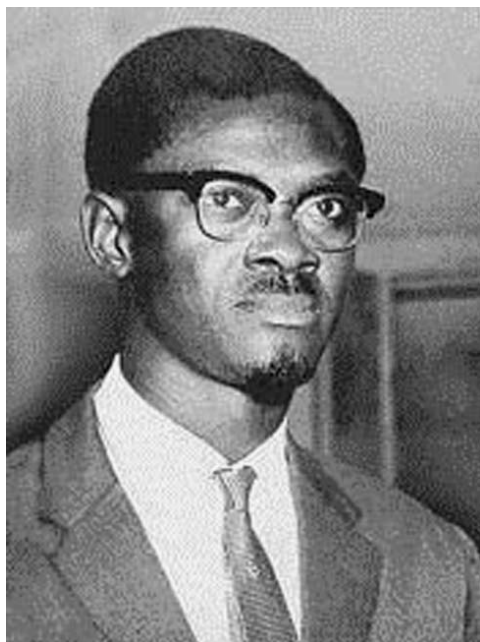
Lumumba ignored this prohibition and, with an eye to the dignity of all Africans who had been mistreated, denigrated, silenced, and murdered under this colonial regime, he risked challenging it. The price of such "insubordination" is high, as Lumumba found out a few weeks later. He would pay the price.

The scenario proceeded. The intrigues of the Belgians were supported by the other Western countries. Less than two weeks after independence, an important province, as well as the richest one, declared its secession. Under the well-known pretext, still used today, that they had to protect the white population in the Congo, the Belgians sent in their troops.

Prime Minister Lumumba then asked the United States for aid, in order to force the occupying troops out of his country. The Americans declined his request in a friendly manner. But they knew that Lumumba would likely turn toward the Soviets in his search for support, advised by his young and

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Patrice Lumumba as the first nationally elected Prime Minister of the Congo, in 1960; and as a prisoner shortly before his execution in 1961, under the “supervision” of a United Nations occupying force.

inexperienced co-workers. This happened after the second province of the country — the diamond-rich province of East Kasai — wanted to split off, and the Congolese national army was not in a position to stop the “balkanization” of their country.

The copy of his telegram to Khrushchov was forwarded secretly to the Americans by a collaborator of Lumumba. For Lumumba, that was the death sentence. The young Colonel Mobutu made a coup; Lumumba and Kasavubu were “neutralized.” The UN troops which Lumumba had invited in put themselves behind the putschists, and undertook no meaningful steps to stop either the secession from the country, or the enormous persecution of Lumumba.

In another documentary in the TV series “Political Murders,” on the mysterious death of then-UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld, it was clear that the destructive behavior of the UN in the Congo was enforced by the British government, and massively supported by the Americans. The British prevented UN intervention from ending the crisis in the Congo quickly. This was fully in the tradition of Cecil Rhodes, according to whose view Katanga, just like North Rhodesia (today’s Zambia), and South Rhodesia (today’s Zimbabwe), should be retained eternally by the British Crown. Because, according to this logic, the rich treasures of the Earth do not belong in the hands of “the niggers.”

Back to our film. After Lumumba’s short, frustrated attempt to flee, Colonel Mobutu threw Lumumba, along with two companions, into jail in Thysville, where his uncle, Louis Bobozo, the highest officer in the new national army, was located. The conditions to which the prisoners were subjected were extremely inhuman, although the three inmates still should have enjoyed parliamentary immunity—a fact which

was ignored by the justice officials in Kinshasa.

Lumumba’s still strong charisma didn’t let Mobutu and his friends sleep well, so Mobutu decided to transfer the prisoners to Katanga, that they might be gotten rid of in the quickest way.

Lumumba was aware that it looked bad for him. He wrote a farewell letter to his wife, seeking to calm her. Even then, he spoke of his vision for the future of this beautiful country, in which he hoped that his children would lead a beautiful life along with other children. This letter was like a message to all who would participate in his murder (see *Documentation*).

The decision on the liquidation of Lumumba was coordinated among the Belgian, American, and British government authorities. Also, there was no pardon for Lumumba’s two companions; they were to accompany their boss to the bitter end.

On Jan. 17, 1961, Lumumba, then 35 years of age, was flown, in the company of his two companions, to Katanga, where the assassins knew that the Katanga secessionists were ready to carry out the murderous work for the whites. Despite the fact that the airport at Lumbumbashi, the capital city of this disloyal province, was under the control of the UN, the murder operation went according to plan. Lumumba was seized along with his companions, first abused not far from the airport, and then murdered on that same night.

A Personal Appreciation

I have seen this movie on Lumumba twice. As with the documentary on the mysterious death of Dag Hammarskjöld, it was televised on Westdeutsche Rundfunk.

My family and my compatriots had to calm me down, when I expressed myself over what I saw in the two movies.

Even today, it is only with difficulty that I can speak *sine ira et studio* [without rage and partisanship] about these events. Perhaps it would help if I spoke freely. I will try in what follows to express my opinion on these political developments in my country.

But don't misunderstand: Nothing is further from my intention than to shoot a whole pile of rage-filled, negative judgments on whole peoples or "races," as has been done against us Africans for centuries, and still is.

My own life has been shaped in reality by three white men, namely, the U.S. Commander Crebs, chief of the U.S. Marines in the Congo for a while; F.W. Tooby, a British UN official and top manager for the coordination of economic opportunities (he was the most important person for Congolese industry and trading affairs for a while); and finally a Belgian priest, Father Guy de Gothals, who could confirm my testimony. These three helped me to flee the so-called Mulelisten war in Bandundu province, where I lived as a young student, and all three sheltered me in Kinshasa. They were also the ones who finally made the idea of going to study in a foreign country palatable to me.

I have lived for a long time in peace with my mixed family in Berlin. Disgust with intolerance and racism in any form binds us closely together.

In the face of obvious ambivalence in the relations between Africans and Europeans in their recent history, it was very clear to me, that Patrice Lumumba and his two companions were murdered in pursuit of colonial interests, and that the affair was not handled like the punishment of any other criminal act of force.

It is by no means exaggerated to say that it was a *symbol* that was murdered. This man incorporated the dignity of all the Africans who had been debased by injustice under colonial domination, persecuted, mutilated, and murdered. It was he who, in the days of independence, had pointed to healing the wounds of the colonial system. For this, they feared him—not because he had become some kind of communist or a racist, but precisely because he was too great for any racist ideology.

He knew and often said openly, that "our independence requires sacrifice." He had a premonition that this sacrifice would be him himself. But that did not frighten him. The force, the debasement, the discrimination had contrasted with an always greater, unbreakable hope. This was the noble principle of his vision and his behavior, for which he stood up to the ultimate consequences full of confidence and credibility. Yet the Europeans would never tolerate a charismatic black man in the middle of Africa, despite all the protestations about freedom and democracy. He must disappear!

I will not share all the later lying excuses: that Lumumba was a communist, a kind of "black Lenin"; that at the time of the Cold War, he was a danger to the West, and so forth. All these reproaches, Lumumba himself unmistakably denied.

Patrice Lumumba was never constituted as a racist, which his Belgian friend Jean van Lierde showed in a most impressive way.

The only thing for which one could reproach him, was the fact that he was so honest that he demanded clear provisions for equal rights between all peoples—and that was a mortal sin in the eyes of his white neighbors.

It remains noteworthy that since the revelations over the involvement of the Belgian government in this murderous plot against Lumumba and his companions, the population of the Congo has not even demanded a comment from the Belgians!

Africa Must Have No More Lumumbas

I would answer the people who are of the opinion that Lumumba was not understood by his people, and was at the same time, born too soon in his country, by saying that the relationship between Lumumba and his people was tremendously strong. The people of the Congo loved and admired him, despite the massive assaults by his enemies from the beginning.

John Stockwell, a CIA agent in Katanga, already made that clear as early as the 1960s, when he said that never again should a politician, elected by the people, come to power in this country, and that in no case should there be another Lumumba. Henceforth, one should only help those individuals into power who would be friendly to the West.

That is the reason why Mobutu was also being patronized massively in September 1960. He would finish off Lumumba with a coup, and eventually rule the rich country of the Congo for more than 30 years. In the 1990s, the West again withdrew its trust in the Prime Minister, who had in the meantime been elected by the National Conference, and utilized a dubious rebel movement for the overthrow of Mobutu.

It is certainly comprehensible if someone in the West is fearful of communism. But it won't do to constantly drivel on about democracy, while at the same time, preventing a people, through conspiratorial means, from electing a wise leader. To build habitable villages in Africa, doesn't cost millions of U.S. dollars. Therefore it is impossible to understand why, without exception, only those African leaders who rule corruptly and undemocratically enjoy support in the West. The people at the time understood Lumumba as one can easily confirm. Because if this had not been the case, the specialists of the Western governments would not have been so afraid of a popular election in the Congo, which fear motivated them to get Lumumba out of the way.

Neo-Malthusianism and the IMF

Today there is a revival of a neo-Malthusianism, very palpable as in former times, which gives Africans every reason for alarm. All the advice of the experts from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank has only

led to eternal indebtedness and indirect enslavement of whole peoples. To whom should Africans turn today?

I don't believe that the population of the European nations is well informed about what responsibility the former governments of their countries bear for the growing misery of the world in general, and of Africa in particular.

The following words from Lumumba's last letter to this wife should be a forceful reminder: "To the children whom I leave behind and whom I probably will never see again, I would like to say, that the future of the Congo is beautiful, and that upon them, as upon each Congolese, rests the sacred mission of reclaiming our independence and sovereignty. Because without justice, there is no dignity, and without independence, no free men."

Therefore, I recommend the program which Lyndon LaRouche has proposed for Africa. Only plans like those Sheikh Anta Diop had drafted for development in the Congo, present a reasonable vision for this continent. Africa will obtain peace only through massive rational development.

Documentation

'Don't Despair'

From the last available letter of Patrice Lumumba to his wife Paulie.

I write these words, without knowing whether they will reach you, when they will reach you, and if I will still be living, when you read them. During the whole period of my struggle for the independence of my country, I have not doubted for a moment, that our sacred mission, that to which my comrades and I have dedicated our whole lives, will triumph in the end. But that which we wanted for our country—the right to an honorable life, untrammelled dignity, unlimited independence—the Belgian colonialists and their Western allies, who provided direct and indirect support, consciously and unconsciously, through the high functionaries of the United Nations, that organization in which we placed our total trust when we begged for its help, never wanted. They have corrupted some of our countrymen, bought others, and they have contributed toward twisting the truth and polluting our independence. What else can I say?

Whether I'm dead, living in freedom, or am thrown by the colonialists into prison, doesn't matter to me. What matters is the Congo. What matters is our poor people, whose independence has been made into a prison (cage), where people observe us from outside, even if it is with a certain well-wishing sympathy, even with joy and delight. We are not alone. Africa, Asia, and all free and liberated peoples in all corners of the

world always find themselves on the side of the millions of Congolese, who will not give up the struggle, until the day when there will be no colonialists and their mercenaries in our country.

To the children whom I leave behind and whom I probably will never see again, I would like to say, that the future of the Congo is beautiful, and that upon them, as upon each Congolese, rests the sacred mission of reclaiming our independence and sovereignty. Because without justice, there is no dignity, and without independence, no free men.

One day history will pronounce her judgment. But it will not be the history which one learned at the United Nations, in Washington, Paris, or Brussels, but that which one will learn in the countries which have been freed from colonialism and its marionettes. Africa will write her own history. And it will be, north and south of the Sahara, a history of glory and dignity.

Don't cry, my companion. I know that my country, which suffers so much, will know how to defend its independence and its freedom.

Long live the Congo! Long live Africa!

'Carry This Day In Your Hearts!'

At the celebration of independence in the Congo on June 30, 1960 Patrice Lumumba made the following speech.

To all of you, my friends, who have fought tirelessly on our side, I demand that you make this 30th of June, 1960, an unforgettable day, which you carry unextinguishably in your hearts; a day, whose significance you proudly explain to your children, so that they can transmit to their children and grandchildren the glorious history of our struggle for freedom.

Because, although the independence of the Congo has been proclaimed on good terms with the Belgians, with us dealing as friendly nations equitably with one another, yet no Congolese who is worthy of the name, can ever forget that it was reached through struggle. . . .

We are deeply proud of this struggle, which brought tears, fire and blood, because it was a noble and just struggle to bring an end to the degrading enslavement which had been forced on us. Our fate over the 80 years of the colonial regime, our wounds, are still too fresh and too painful for us to be able to extinguish them from our consciousness.

Tireless work for wages which did not allow us to quiet our hunger, much less to clothe us or let us live decently, or to let our children grow up being loved.

We have recognized the irony of the insults, the blows, which we suffer, morning, noon, and night, because we were "Niggers." Who will forget that a "Nigger" was addressed

with “*tu*,” naturally not as a friend, but because the respectful “*vous*” was reserved for whites?

We have seen how our country was plundered in the name of so-called laws which merely recognized the right of the stronger. We have endured an administration of justice which was never equal for whites and blacks; agreeable for the one, hideous and inhuman for the other. We have endured the horrible fate of exile for our political view and religious observances; as exiles in our own fatherland, we bore a fate worse than death itself.

We have seen in the cities, the villas of the whites and the impoverished huts of the blacks. The black man, who dared not enter any cinema or restaurant; or the “European” business, of the black man who traveled in the hull of the ship, at the foot of the white man in his luxury cabin. Who could finally forget the gunfire under which so many of our brothers fell, the prisons in which all those were brutally thrown who could no longer submit to this regime of injustice, oppression, and exploitation? . . .

Jointly, my brothers and sisters, we will begin a new struggle, a sublime struggle, which will lead our people to peace, to well-being and to greatness. Together we will reconstruct social justice and ensure that each person gets a just wage for his work.

We will show the world, what a black man can create if he works in freedom, and, starting from the Congo, all of Africa will shine forth.

We will be on guard so that the countries of our homeland really will take care of our children. . . .

Peace will prevail, not the peace of rifles and bayonets, but the peace of the heart and good will. And for all that, be assured, my brothers, we can not only count on our enormous strength and boundless resources, but also on the help of numerous other countries, whose help we will accept if it is true, and does not try to impose its own policy.

In this area, Belgium, which finally understood the direction of history, did not try to oppose our independence; we invited them to guarantee us their help and friendship, and we have signed a corresponding treaty between equal and independent countries. This cooperation, of which I am sure, will be to the advantage of both countries. On our side we will, with due vigilance, know how to respect free mutual obligations.

Thus, from inside and out, the new Congo, our republic, which my government will create, will become a rich, free, and prosperous country. But to reach this goal without delay, I ask you, lawgivers and citizens of the Congo, to help me with all your might.

I demand that everyone forget the tribal feuds which could consume us and discredit us internationally. I demand that the parliamentary minority stand by my government as a constructive opposition, and remain strictly in the realm of law and democracy. I demand of you all that you shun no sacrifice, in order to secure the success of our grand undertaking.

Powell's Dictates Not Welcomed in Africa

by L. Chamberlain

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell's visit to Africa in late May spelled out Bush's Africa policy: The United States will continue to campaign for the removal of nationalist leaders who offer resistance to Anglo-American schemes to loot their countries. In Mali, Kenya, Uganda, and especially in South Africa, Powell made clear that his particular mission was to finish the job of “taking out” Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe.

Given his other message, that the Bush Administration will offer only token aid to the continent, Powell's was an “ugly American” tour of Africa, despite his being an African-American himself.

Refusing to visit Zimbabwe during his overall five-day African safari, Powell used his trip to South Africa to put heat on President Thabo Mbeki to stop being an obstacle to the Anglo-American consensus that Mugabe must go. Powell insisted that the South Africans could not escape the effects of the crisis looming over Zimbabwe, and that Pretoria had to act *now* to make the President of the neighboring country embrace democracy. This is the policy line that has consistently been rejected by the Mbeki Presidency, with Mbeki defending (but clearly not adopting) Zimbabwe's land policy, describing it in such terms as “a correction of colonial legacy” in the neighboring country.

Powell insisted that it was “Mr. Mugabe” who was plunging his country into its present crisis by clinging onto power. Mugabe must “submit to the rule of law,” Powell said, which is the code phrase for bowing down to the free-market “globalization” looting policies of the Anglo-Americans' land and commodity cartels. What was particularly awkward, noted Johannesburg's *Business Day* on May 30, was that directly before blasting the Zimbabwean President, Powell had first commended his host, President Mbeki, for his impressive leadership of southern Africa as a whole. “The peculiarities of the region's politics make the statements unfortunate. That they have rattled Powell's hosts in Pretoria is hardly surprising.” Adds the editorial: “What also renders Powell's tongue-lashing of Mugabe off key are some of the curious inclusions on his African safari. . . . He was happy to participate in photo calls with Uganda's Yoweri Museveni [who] remains a darling of donors in spite of fighting the unpopular war in the Democratic Republic of Congo,” and who has “effectively outlawed free party political activity in his country.”